

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7596

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FOLG TEL BOMBAY 2066 DTD 06 -7 76 RCVD NEW DELHI

BEING RPTD TO YOU. QUOTE.

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT IN

SUBJ: GUJARAT POLITICS

1. SANGHANI HASMUKH, EDITOR OF A LEADING GUJARATI DAILY PHHULCHAB (CIRCULATION 40,000) WHO RECENTLY MET WITH SOME CONGRESS(R) MPS TOLD THE CONGEN POLITICAL SPECIALIST ON AUGUST 5 THAT THERE IS NO PROGRESS IN FORMATION OF A NW GOVERNMENT FOR GUJARAT.

2. HE STATED THAT MRS GANDHI STILL BELIEVES THAT THE GUJARAT CONGRESS(R) IS STILL NOT IN PROPER SHAPE TO FORM A STABLE GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE LOYALTY OF THE 27 MLAS WHO ENTERED THE PARTY AFTER IMPOSITION OF PRESIDENT RULE ON MARCH 12 IS DOUBTFUL. DURING THE AUGUST 2 MEETINGS WITH HITENDRA DESAI AND MADHAVSINH SOLANKI, SANGHANI UNDERSTOOD THE FORMATION OF THE NW GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SERIOUSLY DISCUSSED AND THE TALKS BASICALLY CONFINED TO PARTY UNITY. MRS GANDHI REPORTEDLY STATED THAT SHE WAS DISSATISFIED OVER THE CONTINUED FACTIONAL INFIGHTING AND THE RESULTANT FRAGMENTED RANKS IN GUJARAT CONGRESS(R). SHE ORDERED BOTH FACTIONS TO UNITE.

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3. SANGHANI ASSUMES THAT PRESIDENT RULE WILL HAVE TO BE EXTENDED FROM ITS INITIAL EXPIRATION DATE OF SEPTEMBER 12. HE BELIEVES THAT A NW GOVERNMENT CAN NOT BE FORMED WITH THE CURRENT CAST OF CHARACTERS. HE EXPECTS THAT PRESIDENT RULE WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THERE ARE CONCURRENT NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY/GUJARAT STATE ELECTIONS. HE GAVE NO PRE-DICTION AS TO TIMING.

4. SOME 85 OPPOSITION ACTIVISTS WERE ARRESTED LAST MONTH. PRIMARILY TO BREAK THE JANATA FRONT HOLD OVER RAJKOT AND BARODA MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND AHMEDABAD, MEHSANA AND PANCH MAHAL DISTRICT PANCHAYATS. AS A RESULT, SEVERAL JANATA FRONT REPRESENTATIVES FROM THESE BODIES HAVE TURNED INDEPENDENT WHICH WILL FACILITATE A CONGRESS(R) TAKEOVER OF THESE BODIES.

5. THE GUJARAT YOUTH CONGRESS HAD BECOME A VICTIM OF THE CONTINUING FACTIONALISM IN THE PARENT ORGANIZATION. SOME YOUTH CONGRESS LEADERS OPENLY COMPLAINED TO GOI MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME OM MEHTA DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO AHMEDABAD ABOUT THE FACTIONALISM IN GUJARAT CONGRESS(R) WHICH HAS CAUSED THE YOUTH CONGRESS TO BECOME INACTIVE. SUCH COMPLAINTS MIGHT HAVE LED TO THE REORGANIZATION OF GUJARAT YOUTH CONGRESS.

6. THE REORGANIZATION RESULTED IN THE COMPLETE DUMPING OF THE OLD OFFICIALS AND APPOINTMENT OF A 54 MEMBER PANEL, WITH SOME FORMER NAV NIRNAN STUDENT AND YOUTH LEADERS IN THE KEY POSITIONS.

7. COMMENT: JANASHAKTI, A BOMBAY GUJARATI DAILY OF THE FREE PRESS GROUP, IN ITS AUGUST 4 EDITORIAL AS WELL AS IN AUGUST 5 SPECIAL DISPATCH FROM NEW DELHI DENIED ANY POSSIBILITY OF CONGRESS(R) GOVERNMENT IN GUJARAT IN NEAR FUTURE. BOTH THE EDITORIAL AND THE SPECIAL DISPATCH MORE OR LESS AGREE WITH SANGHANI'S COMMENTS. COURTNEY UNQUOTE. SAXBE

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